A Brief History of Kalamakū Press, 1990–2016

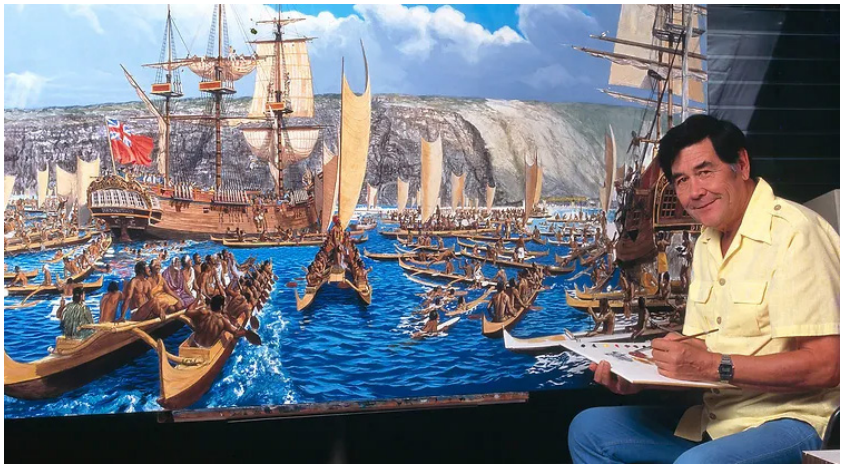
Dennis Kawaharada

Note

The name for the press, Ka-lamakū, refers to the lamakū, a kukui nut torch, two or three feet tall and made with kukui nuts strung on a coconut midrib, wrapped in dried ti leaves, and placed atop a bamboo handle. The oily nuts were lit and burned from the top down to emit light. The torch came to symbolize knowledge and learning. Artist and writer Kapulani Landgraf suggested the name (section 2).

On the front cover, "Night Fishing in Old Hawai'i," a painting by artist and historian Herb Kawainui Kāne (1928–20011), depicts fishermen using lamakū (kukui nut torches) to attract and spear fish on a shallow reef at night. (For a short description of night fishing, see "Hawaiian Fisheries and Methods of Fishing," in the Kalamakū Press publication *Hawaiian Fishing Traditions*, 1992.)

The jpg of "Night Fishing in Old Hawai'i" is from the website for Herb's work @ https://www.herbkanehawaii.com/.



Herb Kawainui Kāne painting a historic enounter between Hawaiian canoes and Western ships. Herb was one of the founders of the Polynesian Voyaging Society (1973), which was one of the inspirations for the Kalamakū Press publication *Polynesian Voyaging Traditions* (sections 6 and 7).

Dedication

"The Brief History of Kalamakū Press, 1990–2018" is dedicated to the writers, translators, artists, photographers, editors, publishers, and distributors who inspired and supported its publications.

The press was established in 1990 when Esther "Kiki" Takakura Mookini (1928–2023) suggested that I publish her and Sarah Nākoa's translation of a Native Hawaiian classic about father and son sailing masters. We titled the translation *The Wind Gourd of La'amaomao*.

Kiki was a Hawaiian language teacher at Kapi'olani Community College (KCC). Her awards included a Po'okela Award for publishing person of the year (2004); the Pa'a Mo'olelo award for her lifetime contributions to Hawai'i's written history (2005); and the Mary Kawena Pukui Award, which honors a non-Hawaiian person who makes a significant contribution to the Hawaiian community (2006).

Other inspirations and supporters included poet and teacher Richard Hamasaki of 'Elepaio Press and Kamehameha Schools; his brother, photographer and artist Mark Hamasaki of 'Elepaio Press and Windward Community College (WCC); writer and publisher John Dominis Holt IV (1919–1993) of Topgallant/Kū Pa'a Press; photographer, artist, and writer Kapulani Landgraf of KCC and WCC; novelist and professor Rodney Morales of the University of Hawai'i (UH); poet-playwright Genny Lim, San Francisco Poet Laureate from 2025–2028; UH professor Paul Lyons (1958–2018); Gail Harada, Darrell Lum, Eric Chock, Wing Tek Lum, and Marie Hara (1943–2019), writers and editors of Bamboo Ridge Press; Pinky Thompson (1924–2001) and Nainoa Thompson of the Polynesian Voyaging Society; Gordon Pi'ianai'a (1940–2023) of the Polynesian Voyaging Society and Kamehameha Schools; and for distributing the publications of Kalamakū Press, Maile Meyers of Native Books and the University of Hawai'i Press.

A Brief History of Kalamakū Press, 1990–2018

1.

From 1986–1988, while on unpaid leave from a tenure-track teaching position at Kapiʻolani Community College in Honolulu, I lived in San Francisco and lectured in the Asian American Studies program in the Ethnic Studies department at the University of California, Berkeley. Poet-playwright Genny Lim of San Francisco set up the interview for me with AAS chair Elaine Kim, who hired me to teach one reading and composition course a semester, for two years. In the first year, I taught a course featuring readings in Asian American literature; in the second year, the course featured American multicultural literature—Asian American, Black, Chicano, and Native American writers.

Teaching Native American literature at Berkeley gave me the idea that schools and colleges in Hawaiʻi should include readings in Native Hawaiian literature as part of a multicultural curriculum for Hawaiʻi's multiethnic students. In my eighteen years in Hawaiʻi's public schools and at the University of Hawaiʻi, from 1957 to 1975, the readings were exclusively White American and European literature, even though the majority of the population and students were Non-white. I wanted to introduce Hawaiian literature to Hawaiʻi's students to provide them with a Native perspective of the place where they grew up and resided; Natives had settled and lived in the islands for centuries before Whites and Asians arrived in the nineteenth century, and the Native culture embodied values and traditions important for island living.

Hawaiian literature wasn't assigned in classes and courses partly because of a limited number of texts, particularly for high school and college students. Of course, since the literature wasn't being taught, publishers didn't have an incentive to produce such texts.

After I returned to Honolulu, Esther "Kiki" Mookini (1928–2023), a lecturer in Hawaiian language at Kapiʻolani Community College, asked me to publish a book-length Native narrative translated into

English by her and Sarah Nākoa, her UH Hawaiian language professor. The narrative told the story of a legendary Hawaiian navigator, Pāka'a, and his son Kū-a-Pākaʻa, who were so skilled at sailing canoes they were said to be able to call forth the winds they needed from a gourd bequeathed to them by their ancestor, the wind goddess Laʻamaomao. The original narrative in Hawaiian was *Moolelo Hawaii o Pakaa a me Ku-a-Pakaa*, published as a book by Moses K. Nakuina in 1902. The Nākoa-Mookini translation was the kind of work I thought could and should be taught at schools and universities, so I decided to establish a small press to publish it, using the subtitle "Ipumakani a Laamaomao" (*Wind Gourd of Laʻamaomao*), as the title of the translation.

I had worked with Kiki before, in 1985, when she asked the two editors of Bamboo Ridge Press to publish a nineteenth century Hawaiian language textbook *ʻO Nā Holoholona Wāwae ʻEhā O Ka Lama Hawaiʻi* ("The four-footed animals of *Ka Lama Hawaii*"), which Kiki had translated into English. As managing editor of the press (1983-1985), I wrote a grant for publishing the textbook and translation, with animal illustrations from the original source.

Bamboo Ridge was a small press founded in 1978 by poet Eric Chock and playwright and short story writer Darrell Lum; it published a quarterly literary journal edited by the two founders and featuring Hawaiʻi writers.

Kiki was the daughter of Japanese immigrants. She grew up in Haʻikū, a plantation community near Kuiaha, Maui, where my dad grew up. She married Edwin Mookini, a Hawaiian scholar who served as Chancellor of the Hilo campus of the University of Hawaiʻi from 1975–1978. In 1974, Kiki worked with language expert Mary Kawena Pukui and linguist and lexicographer Samuel H. Elbert to produce *Place Names of Hawaii* (1974) and *The Pocket Hawaiian Dictionary, with a Concise Hawaiian Grammar* (1975).

While serving as managing editor for Bamboo Ridge, I learned how a small press operated and acquired grants. Before establishing itself as a non-profit press, Bamboo Ridge applied for publication grants through the non-profit Hawaiʻi Ethnic Resources Center: Talk Story, Inc., which was set up to convene a Talk Story conference on local literature in 1978. I asked Marie Hara, the president of Talk Story, if I could apply for a publication grant through her organization, and she said yes. (See "An Interview: Bamboo Ridge Oral History Project [2024]" in "*A Contentious Multiculturalism": Reflections on Literature, Culture, History, and Education in Hawaiʻi, 1994–2025*).

2.

The name of the press I established to print *The Wind Gourd* came from photographer, artist, and writer Kapulani Landgraf. I was thinking of calling the press Moʻae, "Trade Winds," since the narrative I planned to publish was about two Native sailing masters, but she told me no, don't call it that because the trade winds are associated with haole who got to Hawaiʻi on sailing ships; she suggested "Kalamakū," "The Kukui Nut Torch," a traditional Hawaiian symbol of knowledge. The initial goal of the press was to produce reasonably priced books of Native narratives for Hawaiʻi's classrooms.

Kapulani was born and raised in Kāneʻohe, where I grew up. She studied photography with Mark Hamasaki, a professor of art and photography at Windward Community College. She got involved in publication in 1986 when she was a nineteen-year-old journalism student. Kawao Durante, a Department of Education Windward District Resource Teacher in the Hawaiian Studies Program, asked her to record the oral histories of the Kanaka Maoli [Natives] who taught in the program. The result was a book of oral histories and photographic portraits of thirty-two kūpuna. *E Nā Hulu Kūpuna Nā Puna Ola Maoli Nō* ("By the Treasured Kūpuna, the Living Springs of Knowledge") was published in 1987

Kapulani's teacher, Mark Hamasaki, designed a cover for *The Wind Gourd of Laʻamaomao* from one of his prints. I wrote an introduction, added annotations and maps, and published the book in 1990 with a grant from the Hawaiʻi State Foundation for Culture and the Arts.

In a review in *The Hawaiian Journal of History* (1991), Niklaus R. Schweizer, a UH professor of languages and literature, described the significance of the narrative:

> Moses Kuaea Nakuina's *The Wind Gourd of Laʻamaomao* belongs to the books and newspaper articles published by Hawaiian intelligentsia, who was astonishingly productive in the latter part of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.
>
> Translators Esther Mookini and Sarah Nākoa are to be congratulated for having rescued from oblivion the delightful tale of *Moolelo Hawaii o Pakaa a me Ku-a-Pakaa, na Kahu Iwikuamoo o Keawenuiaumi, ke Alii o Hawaii, a o na Moopuna hoi a Laamaomao* (c. 1900), concisely rendered into English as *The Wind Gourd of La'amaomao*.

This saga of the 16th century heroes Ku-a-Nu‘uanu, his son Paka‘a, and Paka‘a’s son Ku-a-Paka‘a, is a refreshing story offering rare insights into pre-contact Hawai‘i. Paka‘a inherits from his mother, the beautiful La‘amaomao of Kaua‘i, the wind gourd, a family heirloom, handed down by her maternal grandmother of the same name, the wind goddess La‘amaomao. The gourd contains all the winds of the Big Island of Hawai‘i, and these winds are at the service of the owner of the gourd, provided he or she knows the respective chants.

The Wind Gourd of La‘amaomao enables the reader to understand important values of pre-contact Hawai‘i, such as the role played by the ideal attendant of an ali‘i, which was characterized by a caring attitude both towards the lord as well as towards the maka‘āinana, the commoners, and which included expertise in a variety of useful skills, such as canoe carving, canoe sailing, fishing, bird catching, and a host of others. Generosity, kindness, loyalty, honesty, justice, filial piety, patience, are values of old Hawai’i emphasized in this saga which was considered significant enough to be published in several versions in Hawaiian and English, beginning with Samuel M. Kamakau’s serial, *Moolelo no Pakaa* (1869-1871), in the newspapers *Ke Au Okoa* and *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*.

The present version by Moses K. Nakuina is based on Kamakau but draws from a number of other sources as well. The prominent role of riddles and the love for intellectual challenges triumph in the crafty exchange of rejoinder and repartee on the part of the chanters. Parallels can be found to similar passages in the epics of Homer and in Greek and Latin mythology. The wind gourd can be easily compared with the bag of winds entrusted by Aeolus to Odysseus, and the parade of Keawenui-a-‘Umi’s canoes evokes the famous catalogue of ships in the *Iliad*. This is not to suggest a spurious link between islands in the central Pacific and the Troy of old, but serves merely as a reminder that traditions of this kind are universal to what could be called the epic stage of a culture and civilization. The translators, both highly accomplished scholars, were faced with a difficult task since the original text is complex, subtle, and filled with obscure allusions. The chants in particular present obstacles on account of a multitude of archaic expressions. Occasionally a touch of the overly modern and colloquial can be found in the English version, but on the whole it represents

> a brilliant achievement. [The "overly modern and colloquial" English was due to my inability to read Hawaiian and create a modern English equivalent to the archaic language.]

I assigned the text to students in a World Literature course I taught at KCC, pairing it for a comparison-contrast assignment with Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* in which Prospero conjures up a storm. Mark's brother, Richard Hamasaki, assigned the text in his English classes at Kamehameha Schools.

Richard, a graduate of Boston University, came to Hawai'i in the 1970s. I got to know him in the early 1980s at an informal seminar on Ezra Pound's *The Cantos*. Richard co-hosted the seminar with UH professor and poet Jack Unterecker, who was a Pound scholar. The seminar met one night a week in a Kuykendall Hall ground-floor classroom to read *The Cantos*, one by one, and discuss each one, line by line.

3.

In the 1990s, Hawaiian language courses in schools and universities were increasing in number, and a community developed that could read and study Native texts in the original language. To support the teaching of Hawaiian, I decided to publish the Hawaiian text of *The Wind Gourd*. In 1992, Kalamakū Press acquired a grant from the UH Committee for the Preservation of Hawaiian Language, Culture, and Arts to publish a photographic reproduction of *Moolelo Hawaii o Pakaa a me Ku-a-Pakaa*. Mark Hamasaki photographed the pages of the original book, and Kalamakū Press printed a historical facsimile.

I first worked with Mark in 1985 on Kiki's *'O Nā Holoholona Wāwae 'Ehā O Ka Lama Hawai'i* for Bamboo Ridge. Mark designed the book and printed it on an offset Multilith 1250, four pages per sheet, back and front. A group of friends collated the pages, then Mark had them cut and bound into books.

Mark used the Multilith to publish books by local and indigenous writers and artists for 'Elepaio Press, founded in 1976 by him and his brother Richard. Its journal, *Seaweeds and Constructions* (1978–1984), was edited by Richard, Wayne Kaumualii Westlake (1947–84) and Paul L. Oliveira. In 1981, 'Elepaio published a Hawai'i edition of *Mana, A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature*, edited by Richard and Westlake and featuring a multiethnic selection of literature and art

from Hawai‘i.

Richard and Mark’s Nisei father, from Pa‘auilo on the Big Island, served in the US Army during World War II. He remained in the service after the war, and married Sestuko Nao of San Francisco. Richard was born at a decommissioned US Army Base in Sapporo, Japan, and Mark at Fort Belvoir in Virginia.

In 1983, Mark used the Multilith to print *Poets Behind Barbed Wire* for Bamboo Ridge. The tanka were written by Issei poets from Hawai‘i who were arrested without evidence of being disloyal to America, designated “enemy aliens”at mock hearings, and imprisoned by the US government for four years during World War II.

In 1983, ‘Elepaio Press also published *A Pacific Islands Collection*, an anthology of poetry, prose, and art by multiethnic writers from Hawai‘i and the Pacific. Richard and Westlake were the editors, assisted by Paul Oliveira and Dana Naone Hall. A second printing of *A Pacific Islands Collection* in 1984 was dedicated to Westlake (1987–1984), who died in a tragic car accident on the Big Island. Richard and Westlake’s partner, Mei-Li M. Siy edited *Westlake, Poems by Wayne Kaumualii Westlake* for publication by the University of Hawai‘i Press in 2009.

Richard recalls that around 1980, Franklin Odo, the director of Ethnic Studies at the University of Hawai‘i, approached Lum and Chock of Bamboo Ridge Press to teach a course in the literature of Hawai‘i, but they declined. Richard and Westlake agreed to design and teach the course. As far as I know, it was the first local literature course at the UH, offered in Fall 1981 by the Ethnic Studies Department. The English Department refused to approve the course unless it was called “Ethnic Writings of Hawaii,” apparently because the professors who opposed the course thought that locals could write, but what they wrote wasn’t “literature.” After Westlake moved to the Big Island in 1982, Richard continued to teach the course until he was hired to teach English at Kamehameha Schools in 1987. In 1988, the UH English department began teaching a course it called “Ethnic Literature of Hawai‘i.”

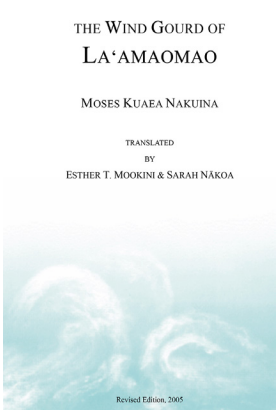
The works of ‘Elepaio Press were featured in the 2022 Hawai‘i Triennial exhibition at the State Art Museum. Also in the exhibition were the photographs of Piliāmo‘o (a collaboration between Mark Hamasaki and Kapulani Landgraf) documenting the devastation of significant cultural, agricultural, historical, and natural sites along the route of the H-3 Interstate Highway during its construction in the late

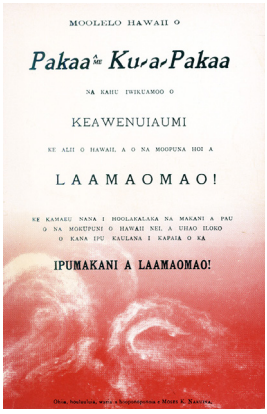
1980s and 90s.

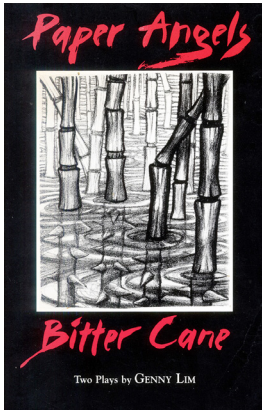
In 2015 the H-3 photographs had been published by ʻAi Pōhaku Press in a book titled *Ē Luku Wale Ē* ("Devastation upon Devastation"). The photos are accompanied by Kapulani's kanikau (poetic lamentations) translated into English by Richard Hamasaki; Richard also wrote the Foreword. I wrote an introduction to provide the historical context of the construction project.

4.

In 1992, Kalamakū Press was awarded another State Foundation grant to publish *Paper Angels and Bitter Cane* (1992), a pair of plays by San Francisco poet-playwright Genny Lim.







In 1982, when *Paper Angels* was produced at Henry Street Settlement's New Federal Theater, *New York Times* critic Mel Gussow wrote, "It is clear from this brief, vivid work that Miss Lim is a poet as well as a playwright. (In 2025, Genny was appointed the ninth Poet Laureate of San Francisco.)

Gussow notes that for Chinese immigrants held in limbo on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay (the setting of *Paper Angels*): "detention is the only reality and 'America is just a far-off place in the mind'":

> It might be months, or even years, before they are admitted to the United States—and eventually some would be sent back to China to face poverty. The waiting is filled with anger, ennui and regret. ... Grasping their few remaining possessions and

comparing memories, these nomads regard the authorities not only as oppressors but also as demons.

Paper Angels was produced for national broadcast by PBS's *American Playhouse* in 1985.

The Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center summarizes the plot of *Bitter Cane*, which is set in a sugar plantation camp in Hawai'i: "*Bitter Cane* focuses on the virtual imprisonment of Asian immigrant laborers by Hawaiian sugar cane plantations, told through the story of a young Chinese son who follows in the laboring footsteps of his missing father." The play was given its World Premiere by professor Jacqueline Pualani Johnson at the UH Hilo Theater; subsequently it was produced in theaters on the West Coast.

Years after the publication, I learned from researching my family history that my maternal grandfather, who came to work on a sugar plantation in Hilo in 1908, was also held on Angel Island. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the US government needed scapegoats to blame for the Pearl Harbor debacle, which resulted from the failure of its military intelligence: the US knew an attack was coming, but didn't know from where and wasn't able to detect an attack force of four Japanese aircraft carriers that sailed from the Kurile Islands north of Hokkaidō to Hawai'i to launch the attack.

My grandfather, along with other Issei, including the poets featured in Bamboo Ridge's *Poets Behind Barbed Wire*, was shipped to the continent and held on Angel Island for two months, then transported to and held for four years in various detention centers run by the US Army, then the Immigration and Naturalization Service. One of the poems in *Poets Behind Barbed Wire* depicts my grandfather, as he was shipped from Hilo to Honolulu, imprisoned on the deck for "enemy aliens," while his son, a US soldier, was on a different deck going for induction at Fort DeRussy after volunteering for military service. (See "Grandpa's Wartime Imprisonment" in *The Life and Times of Gunichi Kuwahara, 1888–1962*.)

5.

The publication of *The Wind Gourd* and *Moolelo Hawaii o Pakaa a me Ku-a-Pakaa* led to an editing contract in 1992. Richard Hamasaki gave copies of the two books to John Dominis Holt (1919–1993), a Native author of short stories, novels, plays, poetry, and nonfiction

about Hawai‘i. Holt also had a press, Topgallant, that published his stories and histories of the islands. Holt was a descendant of a wealthy hapa-haole (part-haole, part-Hawaiian) family of Old Hawai‘i, with ties to the Monarchy.

After reviewing the two Kalamakū Press publications, Holt invited me to his commodious house on Pacific Heights, overlooking Honolulu. We talked about publishing Hawaiian literature and also about the Japanese classic *The Tales of Genji*. Holt was erudite, familiar with the literature and history of East and West as well as Native narratives and chants and Hawaiian history, which he knew not just from research, but from family histories and documents.

Holt gave me two manuscripts to take home and read. One was a collection of traditional stories of Moanalua Valley. Bernice Pauahi Bishop (1831–1884), the last direct descendant of the Kamehameha family, had granted the valley to Samuel M. Damon (1845–1924), the grandfather of Holt's wife, Frances "Patches" Damon. S.M. Damon was one of the executors of Pauahi's trust, which established Kamehameha Schools for the education of Hawaiian children.

The second manuscript was a collection of various essays about the Holt family and Holt's memories of growing up in Hawai‘i. At our second meeting, Holt gave me a check to edit his essays for publication. I worked on sequencing and transitions, so the essays could be read as a personal and family history. In 1993, the year Holt passed away, his press, renamed Kū Pa‘a, published *Recollections: Memoirs of John Dominis Holt, 1919–1935*.

Holt's work inspired me to continue publishing stories of Hawai‘i, and also to research, write about, and publish stories about my family and growing up in Hawai‘i.

6.

In 1985, Bamboo Ridge published an anthology of Native writers, *Mālama: Hawaiian Land and Water*, edited by poet and writer Dana Naone Hall. After I returned from Berkeley in 1988, I assigned works from her anthology in my literature classes, including her poems, and poems by Wayne Westlake, Joe Balaz, and ‘Imaikalani Kalahele. I also wanted to assign a selection of traditional Hawaiian stories, so I went to the UH library to look for teachable texts. Most of what I found was out of print, in late nineteenth and early twentieth century publications by Fornander, Thrum, and other White scholars. I photocopied the

stories and made copies for my students. My guide for research was UH professor Amos Leib's *Hawaiian Legends in English: An Annotated Bibliography*, published by UH Press in 1979. Kiki Mookini gave me a copy of the book. In spring 1971, I took a course taught by Leib, ENG 471 American Literature, but he never mentioned his interest in Hawaiian legends because it wasn't relevant to the course.

From the stories I found, I began compiling anthologies for publication by Kalamakū Press, adding introductions, maps, illustrations, and annotations. By the 1990s, desktop publishing technology was available to publish books at low cost, as long as one did all the writing, editing, and design by oneself or had friends who helped out. Kalamakū Press began publishing without grants. Because of a growing community interest in Hawaiian literature, I knew I could sell what I published to make back what I paid for printing.

The first anthology was *Hawaiian Fishing Tradition*, a collection of stories featuring legendary Hawaiian fishermen and the traditions and practices that enabled them to live sustainably on the islands for centuries. I dedicated the collection to my dad, who taught me to swim and fish in Kāne'ohe Bay and who fed our family with the fish he caught.

Describing the collection as "an excellent catch," reviewer Tino Ramirez wrote in the S*unday Honolulu Advertiser and Star Bulletin* (March 1992):

> The glossary, maps of the legendary sites, and Kawaharada's extensive introduction and notes enrich ["the stories"]. Providing references to other legends and stories associated with the places named, the notes also describe Polynesian fishing practices, from the use of stone images to lure turtles, to the building of log platforms for catching freshwater ʻoʻopu [gobey fish].
>
> Besides being a good read, this [book] makes a lot of material available to scholars, teachers and writers. The proper practice of many of the fishing techniques described here may be forgotten, but the legends' values, characters and metaphors are not.

In 1994, I gave a talk at a UH conference advocating that students and writers in Hawaiʻi read Native literature to inform themselves about the traditions of Hawaiʻi's First People (See "Toward an Authentic Local Literature of Hawaiʻi" in "*A Contentious Multiculturalism":*

Reflections on Literature, Culture, History, and Education in Hawai‘i, 1994–2025).

The next three Kalamakū Press anthologies also featured out-of-print translations of Natives stories:

• *Nanaue the Shark Man and other Hawaiian Shark Stories* (1994), a collection of stories about shark men and shark gods. After the first print-run sold out, the stories were reprinted in revised editions of *Hawaiian Fishing Traditions* and *Ancient O'ahu*.

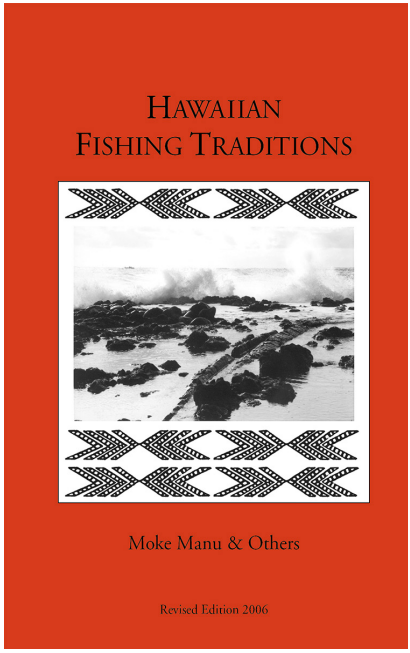
• *Voyaging Chiefs of Havai‘i* (1995), a collection of stories about voyaging and migration in Polynesia, from Hawai‘i to Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Rapanui. After the first printing sold out, I posted the collection online at a website I developed for the Polynesian Voyaging Society, so readers in Hawai‘i and across Polynesia could access it for free.

• *Ancient O'ahu: Stories from Fornander and Thrum* followed in 1996. This publication featured traditional folktales set on the island of ‘Oahu. The publication, with additional stories and material, was posted online at Kapi‘olani Community College's Digital Library in 2001, under the title *Traditions of O'ahu: Stories of an Ancient Island*.

Kapulani Landgraf gave me permission to use one of her photographs, "Nā wa‘a li‘ili‘i kioloa" ("The small, long canoes") on the cover of *Voyaging Chiefs of Havai‘i*. The wahi pana ("storied place") links Kāne‘ohe Bay to voyaging chiefs from Tahiti. The photo was from her book *Nā Wahi Pana o Ko‘olau Poko: Legendary Places of Ko‘olau Poko* (UH Press, 1994), featuring sacred places in the O‘ahu district of Ko‘olau Poko, where Kāne‘ohe is located.

Teachers could have looked for, found, and photocopied all of the stories in Kalamakū Press publications themselves and made copies for their students, as I had done initially, but many teachers didn't have time to do that, or didn't have easy access to the UH library. One colleague, who taught Hawaiian language and literature at KCC, emailed, "I treasure all your work as the reprints made these old stories available again to present day folks and helped reconnect me and so many others to the richness of our literary heritage."

I donated copies of Kalamakū Press publications to all the school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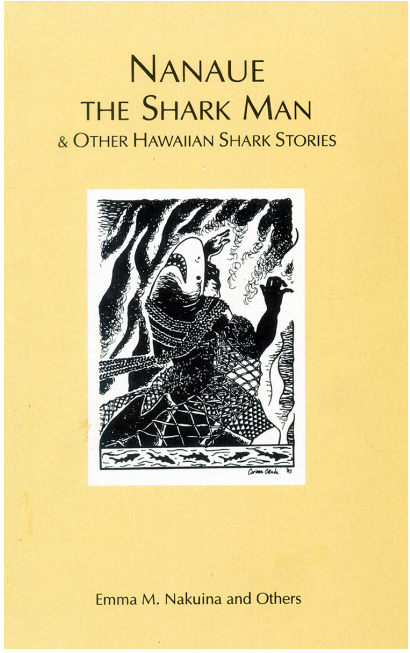
Nanaue
the Shark Man
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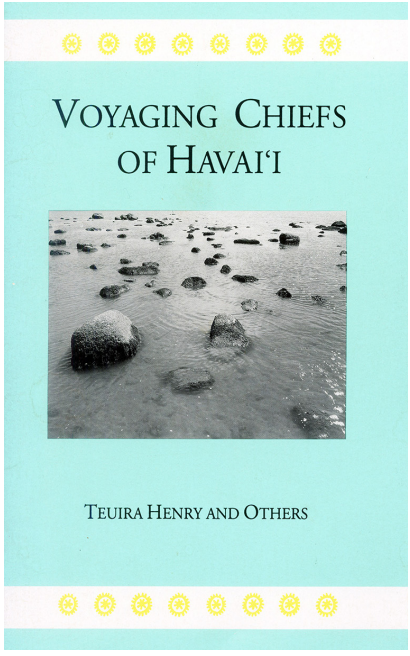
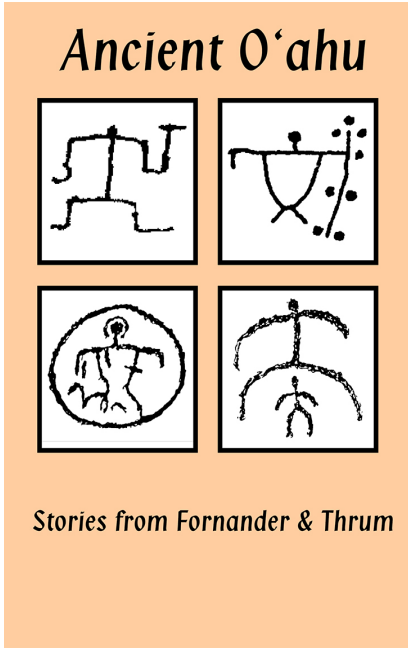
Emma M. Nakuina and Others


Voyaging Chiefs
of Hawai'i
Teuira Henry and Others

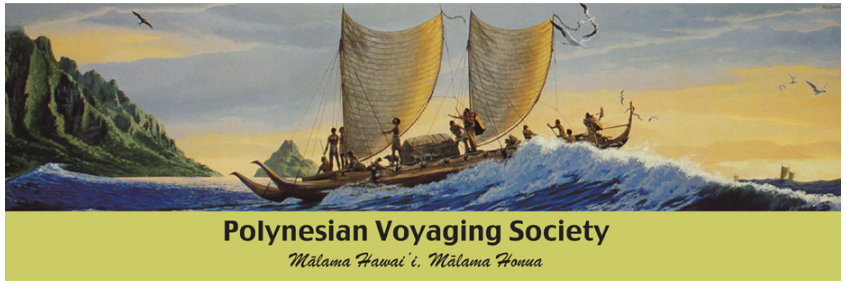

Ancient O'ahu
Stories from Fornander & Thrum

libraries and public libraries in Hawai‘i. In the early 1990s, Maile Meyers distributed Kalamakū Press publications to teachers and students through her newly formed Native Books and sold them at her bookstore. In 2002, the University of Hawai‘i Press added the Kalamakū Press publications to its catalog for distribution. It distribution continued until 2024; by then I had moved all of my titles to Amazon Print-on-Demand and posted many of the online. Print-on-Demand eliminated the need for me to pay for printing and warehousing a stock of books.

7.

In 1992, Kiki Mookini invited me to a meeting at the Bishop Museum of the education committee of the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS). I met canoe navigator Nainoa Thompson, and began volunteering with Kiki on the education committee for an upcoming voyage to Tahiti and creating educational materials for Nainoa's crew and community education program. That led to a decade-long part-time job coordinating PVS education programs and developing classroom materials, maps, star charts, and a website to document the history of PVS, navigation and voyaging traditions, and current voyages of *Hōkūle‘a* (1992,1995, 1999, 2007).

In 1994, Gordon Pi‘iana‘a, a PVS canoe captain and director of the Kamehameha Schools Hawaiian Studies Institute, gave Kalamakū Press a contract to produce educational materials on the history and culture of the Marquesas Islands, where *Hōkūle‘a* planned to sail in 1995, along with a newly built voyaging canoe *Hawai‘iloa*. The voyage recreated one of the traditional migration routes of Polynesians to Hawai‘i. Kamehameha Schools Press contracted Kalamakū Press to update with the latest voyages its student text on the history of *Hōkūle‘a*.



Banner for the PVS website featuring a painting of *Hōkūle‘a* by Native artist and co-founder of PVS Herb Kawainui Kāne, who gave me persmission to his images to illustrate the website.

8.

In 1996, Charles Langlas, a Non-native professor at UH Hilo, asked me to publish a collection of autobiographical essays written in Hawaiian by Emma Kapūnohuʻulaokalani Kauhi, along with his English translations. Kauhi writes in loving detail about the Hawaiian traditions and life-style she lived while growing up, in Kalapana, on the Big Island, from 1916 to 1935. Her home village of Kapaʻahu was destroyed in 1986 by a lava flow from an eruption of Kīlauea.

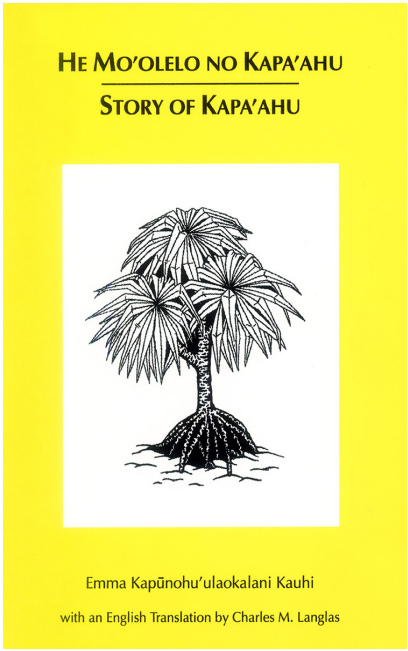
In 1996, Kalamakū Press received a grant from the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts to publish *He Moʻolelo no Kapaʻahu / Stories of Kapaʻahu*. One version of the publication was in Hawaiian only, for language classes because some language teachers told me they wanted to use the text without the English translations.

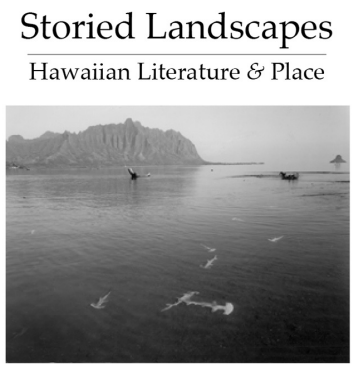
In 2000, Langlas asked me to do a second printing. Instead, I sent him the electronic publication files for the cover and the text of the Hawaiian-English version; to reprint the book, all he had to do (and did) was to change the name of the publisher from Kalamakū Press to Pili Press and send the files to a printer.

9.

In 1999, Kalamakū Press published *Storied Landscapes: Hawaiian Literature and Place*, a collection of autobiographical essays about my research into Native literature, which included visiting places where the stories took place. The essays are about the stories of the Hawaiian fishing god Kūʻula-kai and his son ʻAiʻai, set in Hāna, Maui, and in Nuʻuanu, on Oʻahu; stories of the guardian gods of Makiki-Mānoa, the district on Oʻahu where I live; stories of voyaging chiefs from Tahiti who landed in Kāneʻohe Bay, where the replica of a Hawaiian voyaging canoe *Hōkūle'a* was launched in 1975; a story about the killing of a cannibal king in Wahiawā, a town through which we drove on the way to the North Shore and back; a chant about Kāne, the god of rain and water, and his association with small, remote islands northwest of Kauaʻi; a story of the nineteenth century Native resister Kaluaikoʻolau, of Kalalau Valley on Kauaʻi.

The six essays in *Storied Landscapes* encourage students to read Native stories by pointing out how much a Non-native like me discovered and learned from them about the islands where we reside. The essays were meant to be ironic: while I knew the location of many


He Mo'olelo no Kapa'ahu
Story of Kapa'ahu
Emma Kapūnohu'ulaokalani Kauhi
with an English Translation by Charles M. Langlas



of the places while growing up, I was ignorant about the traditional stories associated with them until I began researching Native literature in the 1990s.

In a review published in the *Honolulu Weekly* (1999), Stu Dawrs, a Non-native from Hilo, accurately summarizes my intention in publishing the book:

> ... the overall sense one gets from reading *Storied Landscapes* is one of deeper meanings and an interconnectedness of names and places that we might otherwise take for granted. In that sense, the book plants the seeds of a lifetime's challenge for its readers: To take an active role in learning about the land, to celebrate the myths that humanize, and to incorporate those myths into a daily existence—not just culturally, but economically and politically—that meshes more completely with life on these islands.

Kapulani Landgraf gave me permission to use one of her photographs of Kāne'ohe Bay, "'Ai ā Māno" ("Eat Like a Shark") on the cover of *Storied Landscapes*. The photo depicts the cliffs of Kānehoalani below which the voyaging canoe *Hōkūle'a* was launched in 1975, with dead hammerhead sharks caught in a net in the foreground.

10.

Posting Kalamakū Press publications on free internet sites pretty much kills the market for books, but broadens access. I got an email from a native of the Cook Islands who was happy that he found his ancestors' migration stories at the Polynesian Voyaging Society website. In 2015, during the Worldwide Voyage of *Hōkūleʻa*, when I went to Aotearoa to help with the education program for *Hōkūleʻa*'s sister canoe, *Hikianalia*, the Maori chanter who greeted the crew at a college told us the, inspired by the stories posted on the PVS website (including the stories of Kupe, who discovered Aotearoa), he traveled to the Big Island to study voyaging with Nā Kālai Waʻa, Moku o Hawaiʻi.

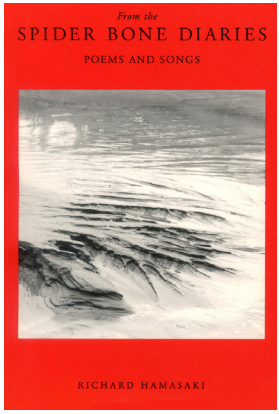
In 2022, a Maori reader from Aotearoa who accessed the online *Voyaging Chiefs of Havaiʻi* emailed:

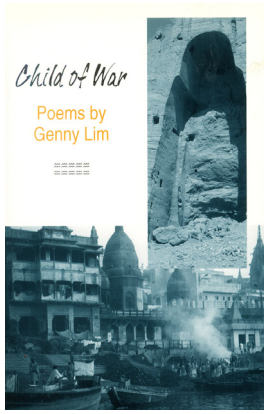
> Kia Orana Te Kopu Tangata o Havaiki. Just wanted to say thanks for the easy to use website and the stories. I'm trying to match my ancestors around and your website made it much easier. Now I just have to track down some physical copies of the sources. Once again thank you.

11

After the publication of *Storied Landscapes*, Kalamakū Press published three collections of contemporary poetry.

- *From the Spider Bones Diaries* (2000) features poems and songs by Richard Hamasaki. Novelist and poet Albert Wendt of Western Sāmoa writes, "Richard Hamasaki's poetry comes out of a rich and complex blend of many ancient and modern literary and oral traditions. It maps, originally and profoundly, the Hawaiʻi and Pacific he's known all his life: the people, sounds, smells, tastes, sights, pain, joy, and sense of it." American poet Gary Snyder writes, "Hamasaki's a fierce, passionate poet with a vision: practiced, communal, convivial, and also unique. Long-line, pidgin, neo-haiku, myth, eros, righteous critique, and Dharma-leaps ... I salute Richard Hamasaki for his bold new art." After the Kalamakū Press printing sold out, UH Press reprinted *From the Spider Bones Diaries* in 2003.





• *Kalahele* (2002) features the poetry and art of Imaikalani Kalahele. Steve Winduo of the University of Papua New Guinea writes in *The Contemporary Pacific* (Vol. 15. No. 1, Spring 2003), "Kalahele dances in the rhythm of his ancestors by evoking mythical themes [while addressing] issues of culture, Hawaiian identity, land alienation, American exploitation, and cultural decolonization. This collection has poetry and art speaking simultaneously, imagining a society that links the past with the present and the future. The Hawaiian artist and poet mediates between ancestral knowledge and modern influences in a lace of art and poetry that floats on the currents of the Pacific, across the islands and in space" (507–510).

• *Child of War* (2003), a collection of Genny Lim's poetry. Matthew Fox, President of the University of Creation Spirituality, praises Genny's work: "*Child of War* reintroduces the reader to the power – and danger – of poetry. And of life. And of grief. And of loss. And of love. And of war. We go into the depths of darkness and learn what happens when a mother outlives her daughter. These poems spare no one. Life itself is on trial. Shadows are let loose. Pain is released. Liberation happens."

Child of War is dedicated to Genny's daughter Danielle, who drowned in a river-rafting accident in 2001. The day Genny called to tell me about her drowning, I broke down and cried. Smart, artistic, funny, full of life and energy, Danielle was about to start her second year of college, in pursuit of her future and her dreams. In "Turning of the Page," Genny describes Danielle: "A confident genius, whose only passion it seemed was / To be happy and to make others happy..."

12.

In 2004, Kalamakū Press published *Local Geography: Essays on Multicultural Hawai'i*, eight essays about my growing up and coming of age in Hawai'i. Ragnar Carlson published a review in the *Honolulu Weekly* (Vol. 9, June 8-14, 2005):

> In this collection, Dennis Kawaharada, a noted chronicler of native Hawaiian literature, explores the historical and contemporary terrain of his beloved Hawai'i. From a memoir of boyhood days in Kane'ohe to a travelogue from a recent expedition to the Northwest Hawaiian Islands, each of these essays weaves Kawaharada's experience into something larger, creating a remarkable tapestry of cultural, personal and natural history. Kawaharada is a gifted essayist—in his hands, the book's title piece becomes in equal parts discussion of the Hawaiian calendar, historical biography of Hawaiian literary figures and exposition on "Moolelo o Pakaa a me Kuapakaa," a native Hawaiian chant in which the speaker circles O'ahu, naming each ahupua'a and each wind along the way. The opening essay, "Mango Trees on Kea'ahala Road," explores the alienation and confusion that result when one's identity is rooted in the soil of Kane'ohe but assaulted by a barrage of cultural and political messages from faraway lands. "I found my prime meridian ran not through Greenwich, God, America or the Bank of Hawai'i," Kawaharada writes, "but through the mango trees on Kea'ahala Road."

Two Non-local readers who borrowed copies I donated to the State's libraries emailed their thoughts:

> *April 9, 2005*: I just finished reading your recent book, *Local Geography*. I enjoyed it very much and noticed that I was the first person to check it out from the Waikiki library so wanted to send a quick note to you to tell you the impression you made on me.
>
> I don't think I'm the typical reader you had in mind while writing. I'm a haole girl from Seattle who's been in Hawaii for a little over two years. Immediately after arriving I noticed how little I knew about Hawaii and its culture, so I began checking out books at the library to learn more about my new "home." I came across your

book on my latest trip to the library. I've read many books about various aspects of Hawaii (history, culture, fiction, non-fiction), but none have made the culture here as real and dynamic as yours. I felt like I was able to look through your eyes and see Hawaii's culture from a Kamaʻaina's perspective from childhood into adulthood. Your stories that taught me some new things as well as verified some feelings I had but couldn't confirm. Of course I understand that this was just one person's perspective, but I greatly appreciate your willingness to share it with your readers.

One of the things I really enjoyed was hearing about the sailing voyages that are still going on. I even think I saw a story involving the Hokuleʻa on TV the other day. This kind of concrete evidence helps reinforce the idea in my mind that the Hawaiian culture is still growing and changing, it's not a static picture that the history books I've read portray.

Another thing that touched me was your sense of belonging to this place. I do not have the same availability to know what my cultural roots are (which is sad), but many generations of my family have lived in Seattle and that is where I feel I belong. I will be returning there soon and you and Hawaii have helped me to be inspired to learn a little more about the history and culture of that place, the place that I call "home."

Sept, 29, 2014: Thank you for your wonderful book! I ran across it at Kaimukī Public Library recently and have been enjoying reading it immensely. Before I return it, I will make a list of all the titles you included in your essays, especially regarding Hawaiian studies. That small volume enlightened and educated me in a way that felt very satisfying. My family has lived on the islands since 1972 and I moved here in 2006 from California, (San Francisco born, third generation, UC Berkeley grad). You gave me a way to relate to the multicultural life here, that I couldn't find on my own. Feeling that I appreciated so much, culturally and historically, but didn't understand many aspects of life here, your words taught me, filled a void and gave me a needed friend—your voice and insight, enriched with your dedicated studies, humanitarian concerns and uninhibited expression. Once I complete reading the literature you cite, I know my feet will be planted more firmly on this island ground!

A reader who grew up in Hawai‘i and moved away wrote:

> *April 11, 2005*: You have removed a heavy cloud over my head. It's amazing how little I knew about Hawaii after all those years living there. It has taken me over 70 years to start really appreciating my local heritage. It doesn't matter that I now live in Portland. It's still amazing, because like the song says "I once was blind and now can see" seems to capture my moment (if it hasn't ruined it a bit). Anyway, a couple of years ago when I visited Haiku, I saw a dual community of old timers and new comers striving in disconnected modes. Now, as a result of Reunioning, I sense they're connecting better and facing a brighter future. But, I think there's still a lot of distance to go, and I'm encouraged by the new breed like you that can make that distance much shorter.
>
> I suspect your PVS [Polynesian Voyaging Society] web page is already a prime source of information for Haiku School students. But your *Local Geography* and other sources cited in it should be made available to them. I will strongly recommend them to their library.

13.

In 2006, Kalamakū Press published *Lā‘ieikawai*, an edited, annotated version of Martha Beckwith's 1919 translation of a traditional Hawaiian romance by S.N. Haleole, which he serialized in *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa* from 1862-1863 and published as a book in 1863. I worked with Kiki Mookini, Kapulani Landgraf, and Richard Hamasaki to edit and annotate the text for contemporary readers. Richard requested this publication because he taught Beckwith's text to his students at Kamehameha Schools.

This was the last Kalamakū Press publication of Hawaiian literature. By 2006, a new generation of Native writers, artists, scholars, and publishers, trained in the Native language, had come of age and were producing and publishing the indigenous literature of Hawai‘i.

14.

Local Geography: Essays on Multicultural Hawai‘i (2004) summed up how and why I got interested in local and Hawaiian literature and culture. After that, I spent over two decades traveling to and writing

Local Geography

Essays on Multicultural Hawai'i

Dennis Kawaharada

Lā'ieikawai

S.N. Hale'ole

about Japan. My interest in Japanese history, culture, and literature pre-dated my interest in Hawaiian literature, and Asian American, local, and multiethnic American literatures. In my second year at the UH, at the end of the fall 1970 semester, my mom took her three children to visit our grandparents' hometowns in Hiroshima Prefecture. Before my dad passed away in early summer of that year, he had asked Mom to do that because he wanted his children to know their ancestral homeland.

To prepare for the visit, I took a course in Japanese language in the second summer school session, and a course on Japanese history in the fall semester. After the trip to Japan, inspired to learn more about the language and culture, I continued taking courses in Japanese, up to the fourth level, and began reading Japanese history and literature in translation. I made a solo trip to Japan and lived in a small town for a month and a half to get a better feel for the culture and people.

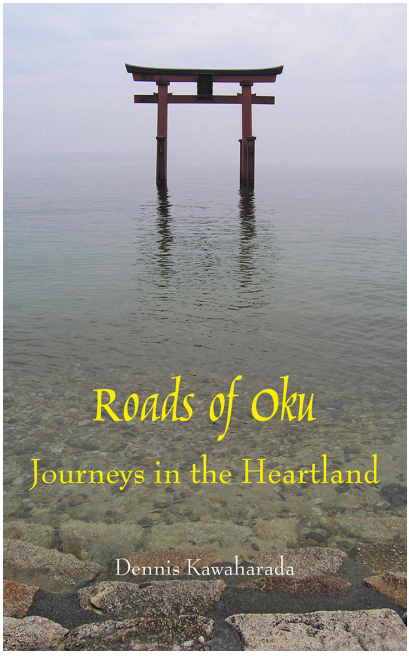
I was thinking of majoring in Japanese until I realized that I would never be as fluent in Japanese as I was in English. My feel for the English language and words was much greater, from all the reading I had done since childhood, so I ended up majoring in English.

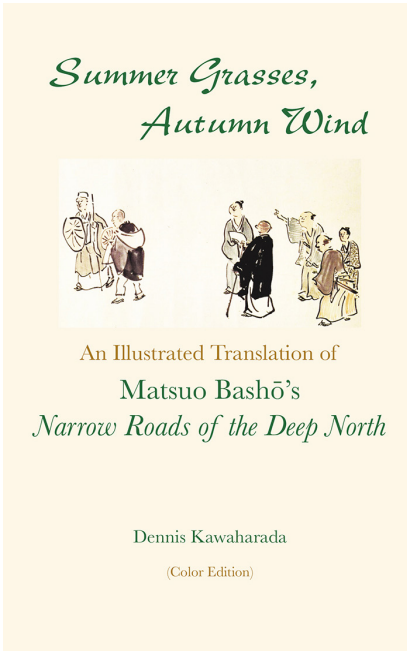
Years later, however, in 2004, with my partner Karen, whose grandparents immigrated to Hawai'i from Yamaguchi Prefecture, I began making one or two long road trips a year in Japan, visiting

historical and cultural sites, from Cape Soya, at the northern tip of Hokkaidō, to Cape Sata, at the southern tip of Kyūshū. I wrote articles about trips. The first one, "On the Road through Kansai: Scenery and Shintō Shrines," was about springtime sakura and sacred rocks in and around the ancient capital of Kyōto (*Honolulu Advertiser,* June 6, 2004). The second, "Poetry in Motion: Travels in Northern Japan in the Footsteps of Bashō and Beyond," recounts a summer trip to Tōhoku and Hokkaidō (*Honolulu Advertiser* on June 26, 2005). "Where Gods Alight: Sacred Sites in Western Japan" followed, about a fall 2006 trip to the birthplace of Japanese legend, in Kyūshū (*Honolulu Advertiser* on January 7, 2007. The final article, "Snow, saké, and [hot] springs warm soul," records a trip in winter to Echigo-Yuzawa, the setting of Yasunari Kawabata's novel *Snow Country* and to the Nozawa fire festival in January (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, March 9, 2008). The four articles (and the next eight, in spring 2008, summer 2009, fall 2009, summer 2010, spring 2011, summer 2012, summer 2013, summer 2015) were posted at the KCC Digital Library website *Fleeting Scenes: Road Trips in Japan*.)

In 2015, eleven years after I began writing about Japan, Kalamakū Press published *Roads of Oku: Journeys in the Heartland*, a collection of six essays. Oku, roughly equivalent to "heartland," is a reference to the interior of one's home, or a remote area of a district or region, where ancient traditions endure. Pat Matsueda, who copy edited the book, wrote a review for the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* (May 10, 2015) titled "Literary, personal pilgrimage comes to life in new book":

> After summarizing how his grandparents settled in the islands, were affected by World War II and influenced the way he grew up, the book alternates between two voices.
> The first is Kawaharada's personal voice recounting the trips he made to Japan, each time recovering some part of his family's culture and history. The second is that of a third-person narrator presenting deeply researched accounts of Hawaiian history and Japanese religion, customs, geography and archaeology.
>
> The last three essays in the book are perhaps the most moving and insightful. The title essay recounts the journey by Bashō, "possessed by wanderlust," to set out on foot from Edo. "In Snow Country" examines the work of Nobel laureates Yasunari Kawabata and Kenzaburō Oe, among other writers. "Hokuleʻa in Yokohama" describes the traditional Hawaiian voyaging canoe's 2007 journey





to Japan.

By this time a reader has grown to understand the relationship between the thoughtful, poetic voice of the traveler and the distant, seemingly dispassionate voice of the scholar. The arrangement of the material has a design and an enlarging, enlightening effect. It's a revelation and a pleasure to travel with Kawaharada on his journey from Hawaii to homeland and heartland.

In 2018, Kalamakū Press published *Summer Grasses, Autumn Wind*, a translation of Bashō's poetic travel narrative *Oku no Hosomichi*, ("Narrow Roads of the Deep North"). To better understand the narrative and poetry for the translation, I spent over a decade traveling to places the poet visited during his 1689 journey to northeastern Honshū, an area known as Oku, remote from the ancient capital of Kyōto and from the shogunate castle in Edo. The book, along with *Roads of Oku*, were posted online at my Wordpress site. Out of the internet blue, Thomas Farber, writer of fiction and creative non-fiction who taught at the University of Hawai'i and at UC Berkeley, emailed, "Many, many thanks for this wonderful and informative translation of Basho's Narrow Road. A great gift to this reader, to any reader." (I was

pleasantly surprised because I never met him, but I read his collection of essays *Faces of the Deep* in 1998 when I was searching for a voice and style for my first colletion of essays, *Storied Landscapes*.)

Both *Roads of Oku* and *Summer Grasses, Autumn Wind* were dedicated to Mom for her lifetime of support, and especially for my education and my first visit to the ancestral hometowns and homeland, to fulfill Dad's wish before he passed away. Both publications came out in time for Mom to read them, before she passed away in 2020. She gave copies to her family and friends. After her passing, I spent three years writing about her and Dad's lives and the lives of my grandparents to thank them for what made the writing and publishing possible. My paternal grandfather passed away before I met him, and I met my maternal grandfather only once, but the values, beliefs, and traditions my grandparents passed on to me through Dad and Mom were priceless. (See, posted at my Wordpress website, *The Life and Times of Gunichi Kuwahara, 1888–1962*; *The Life and Times of Matsuko Mitzi Kawaharada, 1925–2020*; and *Makisō (1887-1953) and Harumi (1899-1999) Kawaharada*.

15.

Between 1990 and 2018, Kalamakū Press published sixteen works of Hawaiian, local, and Asian American literature and distributed over 35,000 copies.

In 2008, Kuʻualoha Hoʻomanawanui, who was hired by the UH English department in 2007, claimed that what I wrote and published about Hawaiian literature during the 1990s was theft of her "land," as the title of her essay claims: "This Land Is Your Land, This Land Was My Land." Her essay was included in an anthology titled *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai'i* (2008), which was co-edited by two UH professors, Candace Fujikane, of the English department, and Jonathan Okamura, of the Ethnic Studies department.

In 2009, I posted on my UH webpage responses to what Hoʻomanawanui and Fujikane wrote. The responses were somewhat hastily written, so after I retired, I revised and expanded them in 2019 when I moved my UH writings to a Wordpress website. The response to Hoʻomanawanui was titled "This Land (Native Hawaiʻi) Is Your Land, That Land (Multicultural Hawaiʻi) Is My Land," in "*A Contentious Multiculturalism": Reflections on Literature, Culture, History, and*

Education in Hawai'i, 1994–2025; the response to Fujikane was titled *The Myth of Asian Settler Colonialism*. The titles summarize what I thought about what they wrote.

As well-intentioned as Ho'omanawanui's essay and Fujikane and Okamura's anthology are, both are deeply flawed because of poor research and scholarship.

End Note

Many of my writings and the publications Kalamakū Press are available online at the Wordpress site, *Pacific Journeys, Hawai'i and Beyond*.

PDFs of the works are housed at the Internet Archive site, *Dennis Kawaharada, Kalamakū Press.*

The following publications are available as print-on-demand books at *Amazon.com*:

- *The Wind Gourd of La'amaomao* (1990)
- *Hawaiian Fishing Traditions* (1994)
- *Ancient O'ahu* (1996)
- *Storied Landscapes* (1999)
- *Local Geography: Essays on Multicultural Hawai'i* (2004)
- *Lā'ieikawai* (2006)
- *Roads of Oku: Journeys in the Heartland* (2015)
- *Summer Grasses, Autumn Wind: An Illustrated Translations of Bashō's Narrow Roads of Oku* (2018).